



Clarke, (Sir) Ernest  
The family letters of  
Oliver Goldsmith

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# THE FAMILY LETTERS OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY,  
OCTOBER 15, 1917.

BY  
SIR ERNEST CLARKE, M.A., F.S.A.

LONDON:  
REPRINTED BY BLADES, EAST & BLADES, FROM  
THE SOCIETY'S *TRANSACTIONS*.

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P.117

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE  
COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE

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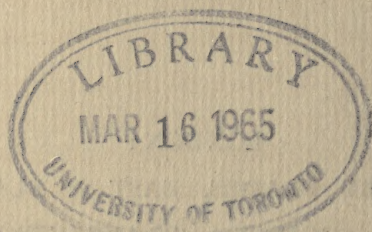
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## THE FAMILY LETTERS OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

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By SIR ERNEST CLARKE, M.A., F.S.A.

*Read 15 October, 1917.*

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N a paper which I was privileged to read before this honourable Society three years ago as to "New Lights on Chatterton," I mentioned incidentally that the researches of which that paper was the outcome had arisen out of the examination by me of a large bundle of papers that had been collected by Bishop Percy of Dromore, the editor of the famous *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, and had apparently remained unexplored since his death in 1811. The Chatterton documents were by no means the most important and were certainly the least puzzling of the array of miscellaneous papers included in this bundle, which contained not only a variety of notes about Shakespeare and other subjects which had engaged the Bishop's attention, but chiefly and most interestingly a large quantity of original letters written by and about Oliver Goldsmith.

To discuss in detail the whole of the questions arising out of these Goldsmith papers would really amount to writing a new life of that poet, which I have no intention of doing. There exist already many biographies of Oliver by writers of the first rank, and no fact of salient importance concerning himself remains to be revealed, whatever may be said as to his writings. There are, it is true, side-lights of some literary interest and value afforded by the papers that have come unexpectedly my way through



the kindness and generosity of the great grand-daughter of the Bishop by whose favour you have the advantage of personally inspecting the original letters which I shall presently describe: but this is not the occasion for minutiae concerning them.

What therefore with your permission I propose now to do is to deal only with the letters written by Oliver Goldsmith at various periods of his life to members of his own family and old friends of his boyhood resident in his native province, and to deduce from them some general reflections as to the warmth of his affections and the simplicity of his typically Irish character.

Thomas Percy, to whom we mainly owe the preservation of these letters, was almost an exact contemporary of Oliver Goldsmith. The latter was born on 10 November, 1728; Percy on 13 April, 1729. They first met on Wednesday, 21 February, 1759, as fellow-guests of Dr. Grainger, the author of the "Sugar Cane," at the Temple Exchange Coffee House, Temple Bar. Percy was then a bachelor clergyman with a college living at Easton Maudit in Northamptonshire, but with literary associations that kept him much in London; and Goldsmith was just emerging from the chrysalis stage of hack-work for the reviews and was lodging in a garret at Green Arbour Court near the Old Bailey. Percy met Goldsmith again on 26 February, at Dodsley's, for whom Oliver was preparing his "Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe," and on Saturday, 3 March, before returning to Easton Maudit, he paid a visit to Goldsmith at Green Arbour Court with the result expressed thus in Percy's own words:

"The Doctor was writing his Enquiry, etc., in a wretched dirty room "in which there was but one chair, and when he from civility offered it "to his visitant, himself was obliged to sit in the window. While they "were conversing, someone gently rapped at the door, and being desired "to come in, a poor ragged little girl of very decent behaviour, entered, "who dropping a curtsie, said 'My mamma sends her compliments and



"begs the favour of you to lend her a chamber-pot full of coal." (Percy Memoir, p. 61.)

Percy was introduced by Goldsmith to Dr. Johnson on 31 May, 1761, and the acquaintance with the great lexicographer and his literary friends soon ripened and grew more intimate. "The Club" founded by Johnson and Reynolds in 1764 included Goldsmith from the first: Percy and two others were admitted to the charmed circle rather later (15 February, 1768). When Goldsmith died in April, 1774, the general impression seems to have been that Johnson would write a biography of him for his "Lives of the Poets"; but difficulties of one or another sort—chiefly perhaps Johnson's inertia, for he was then a man of 65—intervened to prevent this: and eleven years afterwards, when Johnson himself was dead, Percy was stimulated by Edmond Malone to undertake the task himself.

It is not improbable that he had in his own mind long before this that something of the kind might have to be done by him, for there is evidence in the papers confided to me for examination that Percy had commissioned an inpecunious younger brother of the poet named Maurice Goldsmith to collect for him all the procurable letters written by Oliver to members of his family.

The biographers and commentators on Goldsmith have made much of an extract from a letter from Percy to Malone which is printed on page 237 of Vol. VIII (1858) of Nichols' *Literary Illustrations*; but they have been unaware of the letter from Malone to which it is a reply. This original letter of Malone is amongst those in the bundle which I have been exploring. It is dated from London on 2 March, 1785, and gives some interesting particulars as to Johnson's affairs. The essential parts as to Goldsmith are as follows:

"Soon after the death of poor Dr. Johnson, I mentioned to one of the executors that I had formerly given him a letter from Dr. Wilson, a fellow of the college of Dublin, relative to Dr. Goldsmith, who was his classfellow. I did not then know Dr. Johnson as well as I did



"afterwards, and improvidently gave him the original instead of a copy. "I therefore requested, if it should be found among his papers, it might "be sent to me. I suppose Dr. Scott, to whom I talked on the subject, "did not exactly recollect what I had mentioned, for about a fortnight "ago, a parcel of papers was sent to me marked at the outside "“Dr. Goldsmith,” as I imagine from the Executors (for I received no "note with them), who conceived they belonged to me. On inspecting "them, I found they consisted of some very curious materials collected "by your Lordship for the life of Goldsmith, which I shall take great care "of till I hear from you on the subject. I often pressed Dr. Johnson "to write his life, and he would have done so, had not the booksellers "from some clashing of interests in the property of his works excluded "them from their great collection of English Poetry. It is a great pity "that these materials should be lost. Why will not your lordship, who "knew Goldsmith so well, undertake the arranging of them . . . Dr. J. "used to say that he never could get an accurate account of Goldsmith's "history while he was abroad . . . Goldsmith's letters are surely charac- "teristick and worth preserving."

Percy no doubt asked for this bundle of papers to be sent to him in Ireland; and when it was received, he wrote from Dublin on 16 June, 1785, the letter to Malone which, as stated above, is printed in Vol. VIII of Nichols' *Literary Illustrations*:

"I have long owed you my very grateful acknowledgments for a "most obliging letter, which contained much interesting information, "particularly with respect to Goldsmith's memoirs. The paper which "you have recovered in my own handwriting, giving dates and many "interesting particulars relating to his life, was dictated to me by himself "one rainy day at Northumberland House, and sent by me to Dr. Johnson, "which I had concluded to be irrevocably lost. The other memoranda "on the subject were transmitted to me by his brother and others of "his family, to afford materials for a Life of Goldsmith, which Johnson



"was to write and publish for their benefit. But he utterly forgot them  
"and the subject . . . . Goldsmith has an only brother living, a cabinet  
"maker, who has been a decent tradesman, a very honest worthy man,  
"but he has been very unfortunate, and is at this time in great indigence.  
"It has occurred to such of us here as were acquainted with the Doctor  
"to print an edition of his poems, chiefly under the direction of the  
"Bishop of Killaloe<sup>1</sup> and myself, and prefix a new correct life of  
"the author, for the poor man's benefit; and to get you and Sir Joshua  
"Reynolds, Mr. Steevens, etc., to recommend the same in England, especially among the members of The Club. If we can but subsist this poor  
"man at present, and relieve him from immediate indigence, Mr. Orde,  
"our Secretary of State, has given us hope that he will procure him some  
"little place that will make him easy for life; and then we shall have  
"shown our regard for the departed Bard by relieving his only brother,  
"and so far as I hear, the only one of his family that wants relief."

A scheme for publication of Goldsmith's *Poetical Works* was set on foot in Dublin about this time, as appears from the following printed document found amongst the Bishop's papers:

"Dublin, June 1, 1785.

"PROPOSALS for Printing by Subscription, The Poetical Works of  
"Dr. Oliver Goldsmith; For the Benefit of his only surviving Brother.  
"Mr. Maurice Goldsmith, to which will be prefixed, A NEW LIFE OF THE  
"AUTHOR. In this will be Corrected Innumerable Errors of Former  
"Biographers, From Original Letters of the Doctor and his Friends, but  
"Chiefly from An Account of Dr. Goldsmith's Life, Dictated by Himself  
"to A Gentleman, who is in Possession of the Manuscript."

The subscription price was to be a guinea, and subscriptions would be received by the publisher, L. White, No. 86, Dame Street. What happened to the money received for the subscriptions is not known;

(1) Dr. Thomas Bernard (1728-1806), who was also—like Percy—a member of The Club.

probably Maurice Goldsmith drew cash "on account" for most of it. Anyhow the book was never published.

If it had been set about at once, and been limited as proposed to Goldsmith's *Poetical Works*, and a Life of him compiled from the original materials collected by Percy, it would doubtless have been a success. As it was, the Bishop's episcopal duties and other preoccupations appear to have disinclined him to undertake the work himself, and he therefore placed it in other hands, with very unfortunate results to himself and to those members of the Goldsmith family for whose benefit it was intended. Maurice Goldsmith no doubt told his relatives of the pecuniary advantages that were in store for him when the work came out, and appeals for help reached the Bishop from the daughter of Henry Goldsmith, from the widow of Maurice, from Charles Goldsmith, and from a son of Charles named John Goldsmith. In the absence of the published work these appeals had to be met out of the Bishop's private purse, and involved him in much distressing correspondence with the impoverished relatives of his dead friend.

At what period Percy formed the idea of expanding the publication so as to include all Goldsmith's known works—prose as well as poetry—is not clear. Probably he was more concerned to see the Life written or at least in preparation. It must be remembered that he was exceedingly badly placed for now attempting work of this kind. He was in a remote part of Ireland where the posts were irregular and the magazines did not reach him till months after their issue. Writing to Malone on 16 June, 1785, he said: "I see publications about as soon as they would reach the East Indies." (*Lit. Ill.*, VIII, 237.)

He seems to have attempted to shift the burden of compilation of the biography on to a somewhat fulsome correspondent, Dr. Thomas Campbell, Rector of Clones. When, after a long interval, Campbell's efforts proved unsatisfactory, the Bishop tried as collaborator the Rev. E. H. Boyd, the translator of Dante, with equally disappointing results, Boyd, like Campbell,



having no personal knowledge of Goldsmith. Eventually he had to set to work himself on a thorough revision ; but troubles arose after he had sent the manuscript to the publishers in London (Cadell & Davies). Evidently that firm, to give local colour to the narrative, got Samuel Rose to add some particulars about Goldsmith (not always complimentary) from Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. Percy, who was not consulted, dissented from these "interpolations,"<sup>1</sup> and eventually repudiated all responsibility for the work, which did not actually see the light of day until it appeared in four volumes in 1801. Percy let his correspondents who wrote to him about Goldsmith know how badly he was being treated, and they replied softly to him, except George Steevens, who wrote on 9 September, 1797 :

"Thus my Lord, you are left to make the best of your bargain ; for if you cannot intimidate you must submit. It is true that the works of Goldsmith will always be sought after ; but with equal truth it may be observed that in this kingdom you will discover little zeal to promote the welfare of his needy relatives, hundreds of objects here having a superior claim to publick charity." (*Litt. Ill.*, VII, 1848, pp. 30-1).\*

After Percy's death in 1811 the major part of his voluminous correspondence with literary and other friends appears to have descended to his elder daughter Barbara, who had married in 1795 Mr. Samuel Isted, of Ecton, Northamptonshire. It probably consisted not so much of Percy's own letters, which were doubtless retained in most cases by their recipients, as of his correspondents' letters to him, with drafts of his replies to the more important of them. John Nichols, the antiquarian printer who managed the *Gentleman's Magazine*, was a great friend and frequent correspondent of Percy, and the sixth volume (1831) of the well-known *Literary Illustrations* contained a short memoir and portrait of Percy, with a selection of his letters partly derived from William Upcott, Assistant Librarian of the London Institution (p. viii of Introduction). The 856 pages of the next Volume VII of the *Illustrations*, which was not

(1) See letter from Malone to Percy, 28 Sept., 1807, in *Litt. Ill.*, VIII, 240.

published till seventeen years later (1848), were practically entirely devoted to letters from and to Percy—mostly the latter. This correspondence, according to the "Advertisement" by J. B. Nichols, the editor, "was not in my possession at the completion of the sixth volume, but has been acquired since by public sale."<sup>1</sup> Even this huge book did not contain all the Percy letters, for the eighth and final volume of the *Illustrations*, not published till 1858, was, so far as the letterpress (436 pages) is concerned, wholly taken up with the rest of the "Percy correspondence." There are many references to Goldsmith and to the long-delayed "Memoir" of 1801 in these letters, but nothing of great importance, and I therefore have to fall back on the bundle of "Goldsmithiana" which has happily been preserved in the other branch of the Percy family—the Meades.

The story of the incubation, preparation and final publication of the Edition of 1801 is long, complicated and tedious. It does not however particularly concern us here, except in so far as we are indebted to Bishop Percy for having collected practically all the original letters written by Goldsmith to members of his family, and for having in his disappointment after they were published, put them away with the other documents concerning the publication, in a bundle which has been practically unexplored ever since. Setting aside therefore any questions as to the merits or demerits of what has been consistently labelled by subsequent commentators as the "Percy Memoir," we are left with the consideration of the point to which I had intended to address myself exclusively, the epistolary style of Oliver Goldsmith himself. Percy could not resist the temptation of editing his friend's letters—not much, it is true, but still enough to induce us to turn to the originals, as we are now enabled to do through the kindness of their present possessor, Miss Constance Meade.

Now whilst Percy, as I have indicated, was an ardent and industrious letter writer, Oliver Goldsmith emphatically was not.

(1) I have ascertained that it is not now in the possession of the Nichols family. E. C.



One of Percy's most frequent correspondents, James Grainger, M.D. (1724-1766), who was, as already mentioned, the first to introduce Percy and Goldsmith to each other, wrote to the former on 24 March, 1764: "When I taxed little Goldsmith for not writing as he promised me, his answer was that he never wrote a letter in his life, and faith, I believe him, except to a bookseller for money." (Nichols' *Literary Illustrations*, Vol. VII, 286.) The letters written by Goldsmith to members of his family and Irish friends of his youth which were collected from various quarters at the instance of Percy after the poet's death show him to have had a great power of expressing his feelings in simple and moving language, all the more interesting as the writer could not possibly have imagined that they would ever be seen in the cold light of print. Such letters divide themselves naturally into three categories, viz.: those written (1) whilst he was a student in Scotland and abroad; (2) after he had returned to England and was a struggling hack-writer; (3) when he had achieved success in the literary world. It will be convenient to consider these three series of letters separately.

#### STUDENT LETTERS.

I omit from consideration the letter Oliver is alleged, on no evidence at all, to have written to his mother in 1751 after his adventures in Ireland and attempted voyage to America. This is obviously a hash-up by some later pen of the story which was written out after the poet's death by his sister Mrs. Catherine Hodson for the purposes of the "Percy Memoir," the original of which in Mrs. Hodson's own writing and spelling is among the papers which I exhibit. The earliest of Goldsmith's own letters which is known to have survived was that written from Edinburgh by Oliver to his benefactor Uncle Contarine on 8 May, 1753. This was unearthed by Sir James Prior at a later period of his investigations, having been "long though vainly sought in various quarters," and is published in his Vol. I, 1837, pp. 145-7. What has happened to it since I have not been able to discover. Oliver describes in it his progress with

his medical studies, and winds up thus : "How I enjoy the pleasing hope of returning with skill, and to find my friends stand in no need of my assistance ! How many happy years do I wish you ! and nothing but want of health can take from you happiness, since you so well pursue the paths that conduct to virtue."

There is another letter of about the same period addressed by Oliver from Edinburgh to his brother-in-law, Daniel Hodson of Lissoy, of which only a fragment now exists. It was formerly in the Rowfant collection of the late Mr. Locker-Lampson, but now belongs to Mr. F. R. Halsey of New York. In it Oliver speaks of his attending the public lectures : "I am in my lodging. I have hardly any society but a folio book, a skeleton, my cat and my meagre landlady. I read hard, which is a thing I never could do when the study was displeasing." He refers to his impecunious position and to the sacrifices his relations had made on his behalf. He asks his dear Dan to remember him to every friend. "There is one on whom I never think without affliction, but conceal it from him." (This apparently refers to Uncle Contarine). "Direct to me at Surgeon Sinclairs in the Trunk Close, Edinburgh."

The next letter of this student series is to his school-friend and companion, Robert Bryanton of Ballymahon, dated from Edinburgh "Sepr. ye 26th 1753." The original of this letter is the earliest in point of date which I am able to exhibit to you this afternoon. Oliver commences by a humorous apology for not having written before. "I might allege that business had never given me time to finger a pen : but I suppress those and twenty others equally plausible and as easily invented, since they might all be attended with a slight inconvenience of being known to be lies. Let me then speak truth : an hereditary indolence (I have it from the mother's side) has hitherto prevented my writing to you, and still prevents my writing at least twenty five letters more, due to my friends in Ireland : no turn-spit dog gets up into his wheel with more reluctance than I sit down to write : yet no dog ever loved the roast meat he turns better than I do him I now address."



This letter was a long one, with clever references to the Scottish scenery and people, the relations of the sexes, the characteristics of the Scotch women, and other light hearted topics. It was published by Percy in the Edition of 1801, with a number of genteel emendations, such as "mouth puckered up so as scarcely to admit a pea" in replacement of "mouth puckered up to the size of an Issue," and the omission of the last paragraph and also the postscript: "Give my sincere regards (not compliments do you mind) to your agreeable family, and give my service to my mother if you see her: for as you express it in Ireland, I have a sneaking kindness for her still. Direct to me, Student of Physick in Edinburgh."

The next letter in order of date is a second one to Uncle Contarine, not dated but ascribed to the close of 1753 or January, 1754. It was retrieved by Prior for his *Life* of 1837 (I, 154), but its present whereabouts is unknown. It announces Oliver's intention to go to France in the following February, to spend the spring and summer in Paris, and go to Leyden at the beginning of the next winter. He sends his earnest love to his cousin Jenny (Mrs. Lawder) and her husband, asks after "my poor Jack" (doubtless his youngest brother), and describes himself as "dear Uncle, Your most devoted Oliver Goldsmith."

The next letter is an important and very interesting one, and describes Oliver's compulsory change of plans. It was sent from Leyden some time in the summer of 1754, and is written on three pages of a foolscap sheet of unusually large size,  $15 \times 9\frac{3}{4}$  inches. The fourth page has, as you will see, this address upon it: "To | the Revd. Mr. Thos. Contarine, at Kilmore near | Carrick on Shanno in Ireland," with the words added "This letter is chargd. 1s. 8d." It appears therefrom that he embarked from Edinburgh on board a Scotch ship bound for Bordeaux and that a storm drove them into Newcastle, where he was arrested.

"Seven men and me were one day on shore, and the following evening, as we were all verry merry, the room door bursts open; enters

"a Sergeant and Twelve Grenadiers with their bayonets screwd, and puts us all under the King's arrest. It seems my Company were Scotch men in the French service. I endeavoured all I could to prove my innocence : however, I remained in prison with the rest a Fortnight and with difficulty got off even then. Dr. Sr. keep this all a secret, or at least say it was for debt : for it were once known at the university I should hardly get a degree."

As to his future movements, Goldsmith says in this letter from Leyden : "Physic is by no means taught so well as in Edinburgh . . . . I am not certain how long my stay here will be : however I expect to have the happiness of seeing you at Kidmore, if I can, next March."

Oliver describes in much humorous detail the scenery of the country and characteristics of the Dutch people. He says :

"The downright Hollander is one of the oddest figures in Nature. Upon a head of lank hair he wears a half-cock'd narrow-leav'd hat, laced with black ribon : no coat but seven waistcoats and nine pairs of breeches so that his hips reach almost up to his arm-pits. This well cloathed vegetable is now fit to see company or make love : but what a pleasing creature is the object of his appetite : why she wears a large friez cap with a deal of flanders lace and for every pair of breeches he carries, she puts on two petticoats. Is it not surprizing how things should ever come close enough to make it a match?"

Bishop Percy prints the whole of this letter, except that he delicately bowdlerised one or two phrases in it, and from the Percy version it has reappeared in every one of the succeeding biographies.

#### EARLY LETTERS FROM LONDON.

The second series of letters begins after Oliver had returned to England about a couple of years, and was "by a very little practice as a physician and a very little reputation as a poet making a shift to live," as he describes it in a letter to his brother-in-law Dániel Hodson, dated



from the Temple Exchange Coffee House, on 27 December, 1757. His brother Charles Goldsmith had paid Oliver a visit in London, and had informed him "of the fatigue you were at in soliciting a subscription to relieve me, not only among my friends and relations, but acquaintance in general. Tho my pride might feel some repugnance at being thus relieved, yet my gratitude can suffer no diminution . . . Whether I eat or starve, live in a first floor or four pairs of stairs high, I still remember them [my friends] with ardour, nay my very country comes in for a share of my affection. Unaccountable fondness for country, this *maladie du Pays*, as the french call it." He hopes that if he can be absent six weeks from London next summer "to spend three of them among my friends in Ireland. My design is purely to visit, and neither to cut a figure nor levy contributions—neither to excite envy nor solicit favour: in fact my circumstances are adapted to neither. I am too poor to be gazed at, and too rich to need assistance."

Percy here omits what he calls "some mention of private family matters." The letter is at this point frayed and imperfect, but these words can be made out:

"Charles is furnished with everything necessary, but why . . . stranger "to assist him. I hope he will be improved in his . . . against his "return [from Jamaica]. Poor Jenny! But it is what I expected. My "mother too has lost Pallas! My dear Sir, these things give me real "uneasiness, and I could wish to redress them. But at present there is "hardly a Kingdom in Europe in which I am not a debtor" etc.

After an interval, Goldsmith had what was for him a real bout of letter-writing to a number of his kinsfolk and friends, to solicit their assistance in getting subscriptions for his "Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe" on which he was engaged, and which was about to be published. On 7 August, 1758, he wrote to his cousin and school-fellow Edward Mills that his "Essay on the Present State of Taste and Literature in Europe," as it was then called, was "now printing

in London, and I have requested Mr. Radcliff, Mr. Lawder, Mr. Bryanton, my brother Mr. Henry Goldsmith, and my brother-in-law Mr. Hodson, to circulate my proposals among their acquaintances."

The letter to Dr. Radcliff is unknown: the date of that to Mrs. Lawder, asking her husband's help, is 15 August, 1758; that to Bryanton is 14 August, 1758; the letter to Henry Goldsmith is lost, but a second letter to him on the same subject says "I shall the beginning of next month send over two hundred and fifty books." As the work was published on 2 April, 1759, the date of this second letter to the Revd. Henry Goldsmith was probably February, 1759. (It has been preserved, but is not actually dated.)

Taking these several communications in the order of their date, the letter of 7 August, 1758, to Edward Mills, which I exhibit to-day, is a frank appeal for help in circulating the prospectus of Oliver's new book, but otherwise contains nothing of importance. "Every book published here [London] the printers in Ireland republish there, without giving the Author the least consideration for his copy. I would in this respect disappoint their avarice, and have all the additional advantages that may result from the sale of my performance there to myself."

Neither Mills nor Lawder (to whom a similar request was made through the medium of his wife on the 15th of the same month of August, 1758) appears to have taken any notice of it, and in writing to his brother Henry at a later date—about February, 1759—Oliver says "The behaviour of Mr. Mills and Mr. Lawder is a little extraordinary: however, their answering neither you nor me is a sufficient indication of their disliking the employment which I assignd them. As their conduct is different from what I had expected so I have made an alteration in mine. I shall the beginning of next month send over two hundred and fifty books, which are all that I fancy, can be well sold among you."

The next letter, that dated 14 August, 1758, addressed to Robert Bryanton is only known to us through its appearance for the first time



in Prior's *Life* (I, 263). It complains of not having heard from Bryanton or of his doings, gives an amusing prophecy of his own future fame 200 years onwards as the author of the *Essay on Polite Learning* "a work well worth its weight in diamonds," and then descends suddenly to earth with "Oh! Gods! Gods! here in a garret writing for bread and expecting to be dunned for a milk-score! However, dear Bob, whether in penury or affluence, serious or gay, I am ever thine. Give the most warm and sincere wish you can conceive to your mother, Mrs. Bryanton, to Miss Bryanton, to yourself: and if there be a favourite dog in the family, let me be remembered to it."

The letter to Mrs. Lawder of 15 August, 1758, is a good deal more guarded, as his relations with his cousin and her husband appear not to have been at that time of a very cordial nature. The original has passed through several hands, and has been reproduced more than once in facsimile. I believe it is now the property of Mr. Sabin of Bond Street. Oliver says he had written to Kilmore (Mrs. Lawder's address) from Leyden, from Louvain and from Rouen, but had received no answer. "To what could I attribute this, please, but displeasure or forgetfulness?" . . . "I heartily wish to be rich, if it were only for this reason to say without a blush how much I esteem you, but alas I have many a fatigue to encounter, before that happy time comes: when your poor old simple friend may again give a loose to the luxuriance of his nature, sitting by Kilmore fireside, recount the various adventures of an hard-fought life, laugh over the follies of the day, join his flute to your harpsicord and forget that he ever starv'd in those streets where Butler and Otway starv'd before him." After a pathetic allusion to the decaying mental powers of his uncle Contarine, Oliver then makes his appeal as to the "Polite Learning," but "whether this request is complied with or not, I shall not be uneasy."

The second letter to Daniel Hodson, which I exhibit, is provisionally dated by the modern authorities about November, 1758. It was published

by Percy in the edition of 1801, with the family matters omitted, and some few alterations and excisions. The letter really begins "You can't expect regularity in a *correspondence with* one who is regular in nothing." Later, Goldsmith says: "You imagine, I suppose, that every author by profession lives in a garret, wears shabby cloaths and converses with the meanest company; *but I assure you such a character is* entirely chimerical." The family matters omitted by Percy may as well be restored:

"I am very much pleas'd with the accounts you send me of your little son; if I do not mistake that was his hand which subscrib'd itself "Gilbeen Hardly. There is nothing could please me more than a letter fill'd with all the news of the country, but I fear you will think that too troublesome, you see I never cease writing till a whole sheet of paper is wrote out. I beg you will immitate me in this particular and give your letters good measure. You can tell me, what visits you receive or pay, who has been married or debauch'd, since my absence, what fine girls you have starting up and beating of the veterans of my acquaintance from future conquest. I suppose before I return I shall find all the blooming virgins I once left in Westmeath shrivelled into a parcel of hags with seven children apiece tearing down their petticoats. Most of the Bucks and Bloods whom I left hunting and drinking and swearing and getting bastards I find are dead. Poor devils they kick'd the world before them. I wonder what the devil they kick now." [End of first sheet of letter.]

On a fresh sheet:

"Dear Sister I wrote to Kilmore [where the Lawders lived]. I wish you would let me know how that family stands affected with regard to me. My Brother Charles promised to tell me all about it but his letter gave me no satisfaction in those particulars. I beg you and Dan would put your hands to the oar and fill me a sheet with somewhat or other, if you can't get quite thro your selves lend Billy or Nancy the pen and let the dear little things give me their nonsense. Talk all



"about your selves and nothing about me. You see I do so. I do not know how my desire of seeing Ireland which had so long slept, has again revived with so much ardour . . . ." "I . . . . brother Charles is settled to business. I see no probability of . . . . any other proceeding." [Here follow sixteen lines of writing, which have been very effectually blotted out with ink of another tint, probably by the recipient, who sent the letter to be read by a neighbour.]

The letter ends thus (it is not signed):

"Pray let me hear from my Mother since she will not gratify me herself and tell me if in any thing I can be immediately serviceable to her. Tell me how my Brother Goldsmith and his Bishop agree. Pray do this for me for heaven knows I would do anything to serve you." [ends.]

The back page is blank, except the address in Goldsmith's writing: "Daniel Hodson Esq<sup>r</sup>. at Lishoy near | Ballymahon | Ireland."

We come now to the one letter to his brother the Revd. Henry Goldsmith which has been preserved. It bears no date, and was doubtless written about February, 1759. After speaking about the "Polite Learning" book, Oliver goes on to describe his own difficulties:

"You scarce can conceive how much eight years of disappointment anguish and study have worn me down. Imagine to yourself a pale melancholly visage with two great wrinkles between the eye-brows, with an eye disgustingly severe and a big wig, and you may have a perfect picture of my present appearance."

He then discusses and approves as judicious and convincing his brother's proposals for "breeding up your son as a scholar." "Preach then my dear Sir, to your son not the excellence of human nature nor the disrespect of riches, but endeavour to teach him thrift and economy. Let his poor wandering uncle's example be placed in his eyes. I had learnd from books to love virtue before I was taught from experience the

necessity of being selfish." (The Percy Memoir of 1801 prunes and waters down this passage.)

After references to his mother and other members of the family, Oliver mentions the imminent publication of his "catchpenny" life of Voltaire, which has brought him in £20, and quotes some phrases of the "heroicomic poem" on the design of which he had asked his brother's opinion in a previous letter (now lost).

These are the well-known lines commencing

The window, patch'd with paper lent a ray,  
That feebly show'd the state in which he lay

with the subsequent references to the "sanded floor" the "humid wall" the game of goose, "the twelve rules the royal martyr drew," etc. These lines with a different setting reappeared in Letter XXX of the Citizen of the World, which first appeared in the *Public Ledger* for 2 May, 1760, and some of them were worked afterwards into lines 227-36 of the Deserted Village, 1770, where they are improved by the addition of:

"The Chest contriv'd a double debt to pay  
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day."

Following his usual practice when he does set to work on a letter, Oliver writes on to the extreme bottom of the page, and finishes thus: "I am resolved to leave no space, tho I should fill it up only by telling you what you very well know already, I mean that I am your most affectionate friend and brother, Oliver Goldsmith."

#### LATER LETTERS.

There is now a long gap in the letters to his family, only in fact broken by two communications, one to his nephew Henry dated 7 June, 1768, condoling with him on the death of his father the Revd. Henry, and the other to his own brother Maurice despatched about January, 1770, in response to the latter's request for financial assistance.



The first of these two letters has only just come to light, having been recently purchased through a dealer who got it from Nova Scotia by Mr. William Harris Arnold of Nutley, New Jersey, U.S.A., to whose kindness I owe a transcript of it. It is a letter of deep feeling at the death of his brother, and contains a promise to help the nephew if possible.

The second letter to Maurice Goldsmith—the last of the series on which I propose to comment—makes over to him a legacy of £15 which Uncle Contarine had left to Oliver in his will, and regrets his inability to help Maurice further. “I am not fond of thinking of the necessities of those I love, when it is so very little in my power to help them. I am sorry to find you are still every way unprovided for, and what adds to my uneasiness is that I have received a letter from my sister Johnson by which I learn that she is pretty much in the same circumstances.” It is true that the King has made him Professor of Ancient History to the newly established Royal Academy of Arts (1768), “but there is no salary annexed, and I took it rather as a compliment to the institution than any benefit to myself. Honours to one in my situation are something like ruffles to a man that wants a shirt.” Oliver sends kind messages to members of the family, and asks specifically for particulars about them. “A sheet of paper occasionally filled with news of this kind would make me very happy and would keep you nearer my mind. As it is my dear brother believe me to be Yours most affectionately, Oliver Goldsmith.”

The remaining letters printed in the Percy Memoir do not concern Goldsmith's family, but it may be mentioned incidentally that they are all in the bundle of Goldsmithiana left by the Bishop. They are (1) a letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds written from France in 1770 when Oliver acted as escort to Mrs. Horneck and her two charming daughters the Jessamy Bride and Little Comedy. (2) A letter by Goldsmith to Bennet Langton dated 7 September, 1771 (with, it may be added, the letter from Langton—not printed in the Memoir—to which it is a reply). (3) Letters

to Goldsmith from General Oglethorp (no date), Thomas Paine (21 December, 1772), John Oakman (a begging letter in verse, dated 27 March, 1773), and other miscellanea.

#### MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.

I should be sorry if I left you with the impression that the letters from which I have been reading extracts were the only original documents connected with the poet and his works included in Dr. Percy's manuscript bundle of "Goldsmithiana." The contrary is the case : but the time available to me this afternoon is too short to enable me to discuss the various interesting points that they raise. I feel, however, I must refer in the briefest manner possible to some miscellaneous papers of different kinds which I found therein relating to the preliminaries for and the production of that delightful and ever-fresh comedy of "She Stoops to Conquer," first given to the world on Monday, 15 March, 1773. There are a letter from the Prompter dated "Sunday evening" (no doubt 14 March, 1773), saying he had taken the necessary steps for changing the name of the play from "The Mistakes of a Night"; orders for boxes for subsequent performances; requests for free seats; congratulations and criticism on its success; a full account in Percy's writing of Goldsmith's personal chastisement of Evans the bookseller for Kenrick's malicious article in the *London Packet* of Wednesday, 24 March, 1773 (endorsed in the Bishop's hand "The termination of the affray with Evans, as first intended, but afterwards altered out of tenderness to Dr. G's Memory"); a printed copy of the *London Packet* of Friday, 26 March, containing its own account of the encounter with Evans; George Coleman's original letter of 23 March, 1773, begging Goldsmith to "take him off the rack of the newspapers"; manuscript copies (not in Goldsmith's writing) of two rejected Epilogues to the play; and other documents of great human interest.

As I have consistently tried in this address to avoid indulging in theories, and to limit myself to demonstrable facts, I refrain from a



discussion as to why these documents of 1773 are in such force in the resuscitated bundle of Percy papers, whereas there are comparatively few and scattered documents of earlier date. I should not, however, be surprised if Goldsmith, dreading that the commotion caused and public comment excited by his scuffle with Evans might involve him in further disagreeable consequences, had himself collected these papers and consulted Percy personally thereon, with the result that they remained in the latter's custody.

When nearly a quarter of a century later, Percy put his hand to the preparation of the Memoir of his friend, he may have thought that the discreditable incidents obscuring the memory of a great public success were best buried in oblivion; and he therefore confined himself in the published work to the statement that "She Stoops to Conquer" "added "very much to the author's reputation, and brought down upon him a "torrent of congratulatory addresses and petitions from less fortunate "bards whose indigence compelled them to solicit his bounty, and of "scurrilous abuse from such of them, as being less reduced, only envied his success." (*Memoir*, p. 101.)

Percy could not, it is true, resist the temptation of placing on record in the Memoir "Tom Tickle's" attack on Goldsmith in the *London Packet*: but, says he, "we would not defile our page with this scurrilous production, so shall insert it in the margin." (pp. 103-5, notes.)

It seems to me not unlikely that Percy's opinion was sought as to the wording of the defence or disclaimer by Goldsmith "To the Public" which appeared in the *Daily Advertiser* of 31 March, 1773, as this also is printed *in extenso* in the Memoir of 1801 (pp. 107-8). Dr. Johnson had certainly no hand in its preparation, for on Saturday, 3 April, in response to an enquiry by the obsequious Boswell, he said: "Sir, Dr. Goldsmith would no more have asked me to have wrote such a thing as that for him, than he would have asked me to feed him with a spoon, or to do anything else that denoted imbecility . . . . He has indeed done it very well, but

it is a foolish thing well done." Percy says in the Memoir (p. 107): "The subject of this dispute was long discussed in the public papers, which discarded on the impropriety of attacking a man in his own house: and an action was threatened for the assault: which was at length compromised": and here he leaves it, as we may well do.

One other matter connected with "She Stoops to Conquer" I must ask your permission to touch upon before I conclude. Four attempts were made at an Epilogue for the play, and the Percy documents enable us for the first time to understand the sequence of these. Two of them were printed (not quite textually) in Vol. II of the Memoir of 1801, and Percy, who set great store by them, complains to his correspondents that enough credit was not given to him by the publishers for them. He told Dr. Robert Anderson:

"The Dr. had likewise given him two original Poems that had never been printed. These are the two Epilogues printed in the second Volume, viz: that spoken by Mrs. Bulkley and Miss Catley, and that intended for Mrs. Bulkley. The latter [it] is said in a Note, was given in Manuscript to Dr. Percy by the Author, but no such mention is made of the former, tho' it was also so given by him and delivered to the Publishers in his own writing."

Percy was a little in doubt about the second of these Epilogues (which in the edition of 1801 he cut down from 58 lines to 42), for he invited George Steevens on 10 September, 1797, to ask Mrs. Bulkley if she remembered for what play it was intended: "He [Goldsmith] gave it me among a parcel of letters and papers, some written by himself, and some addressed to him, but with not much explanation" (*Literary Illustrations*, VII, 31). Steevens' reply of 14 September, 1797, was in his usual caustic vein: "The lady you would have interrogated ceased to be at least seven years ago: and what would the public say could it be known that your Lordship, a Protestant Bishop, was desirous to send your sober correspondents into the other world a harlot-hunting?" (*Ibid*, 32).



It is a little surprising that the Bishop should not have at once recognised its obvious associations with "She Stoops to Conquer," in view of the two lines at the end of the Epilogue :

"No high-life scenes, no sentiment : the creature  
"Still stoops among the low to copy nature."

But all these points, in their way interesting and even absorbing, are rather beyond the object with which I embarked upon this paper, viz. : to do justice to the affectionate side of Goldsmith's warm Irish nature by bringing into relief the letters which, despite his repugnance to correspondence, he from time to time addressed to members of his own family with ardent and even pitiful appeals for news from Ireland. These appeals, it is to be feared, had no satisfactory response from the recipients of the letters which after their many adventures I have now had the privilege of exhibiting to you, and which I think serve to illustrate the truth of Dr. Johnson's dictum : "Goldsmith was a man of such variety  
"of powers and such felicity of performance, that he always seemed to  
"do best that which he was doing : a man who had the art of being  
"minute without tediousness, and general without confusion ; whose  
"language was copious without exuberance, exact without constraint and  
"easy without weakness."

## APPENDIX.

*Biographical particulars as to the members of Oliver Goldsmith's family,  
partly from unpublished sources.*

Oliver Goldsmith died on 4 April, 1774. Although there was some talk of a biography of him being undertaken by Johnson, it appears to have become a common understanding, soon after the death, amongst the members of The Club and their associates that the work of collecting and preparing the materials for the biography would be done by Thomas Percy. At that time Percy had achieved a certain reputation in literary circles, but was by no means the important person in the ecclesiastical sense that he afterwards became. He was then mainly resident in London as Chaplain and Secretary to the Duke of Northumberland and as one of the Chaplains of the King. It was not until 1778 that he was made Dean of Carlisle, from which position he was promoted in 1782 to the Bishopric of Dromore in Ireland.

Percy had already written out in his own hand a Memorandum dictated to him by Goldsmith himself "one rainy day at Northumberland House" (28 April, 1773) giving dates and many interesting particulars relating to his life," and this Memorandum is still in existence. Too much importance must not be attached to it. Percy no doubt regarded it as a Memorandum only, which might prove useful under future conditions that had not then arisen, and how much of it is Goldsmith and how much Percy must for ever remain unknown. The Statement was communicated to Johnson; not used by him: returned by his executors to the wrong person (Malone), sent by him to Percy, and apparently not used textually by him for the purpose of his Memoir of his friend. In any case, there is not much in it about the members of Oliver's family.

Sir James Prior was ignorant of the existence of this Memorandum, when preparing his *Life of Goldsmith* (Murray, 1837): but with his



praiseworthy carefulness, he set about whilst he was in Ireland in the early part of the nineteenth century to dig up such particulars as he could discover about Oliver's parentage ; and what he says concerning "the Goldsmith Family" in his first Chapter is the fullest and most authoritative history of the poet's forebears that was capable of being written within half a century of Goldsmith's death and with the information at that time available.

It is not necessary for present purposes to go further back than Oliver's grandfather, whose name was Robert Goldsmith of Ballyoughter (not John, as in Dr. Percy's Statement). The following facts are known about this ancestor of the poet.

#### I. ROBERT GOLDSMITH OF BALLYOUGHTER.

(Oliver's Grandfather.)

Robert, elder of two sons of the Revd. John Goldsmith, of Newton, Co. Meath, and Jane Madden, of Donore, Co. Dublin, does not appear to have gone to College or to have exercised any profession. He "married Catherine, daughter of Thomas Crofton, D.D., Dean of Elphin, and settled down at Ballyoughter, near the residence of his father-in-law" (Prior I, 5). By his wife, "who enjoyed a moderate fortune, he had a family of thirteen children, nine sons and four daughters." Several of them died young. John, the eldest son of Robert, "who had been educated at Trinity College preparatory to studying for the bar, settled down on the family property at Ballyoughter" (Prior I, 5). The second son Charles, who also went to Trinity College, was the father of the poet (*see* § 2). One of the daughters, Jane, married the Rev. Thomas Contarine of Oran (*see* § 4).

#### 2. THE REVD. CHARLES GOLDSMITH.

(Oliver's Father.)

Charles Goldsmith entered Trinity College as a pensioner on the 16 June, 1707. He was described in the Register as born and educated "prope Elphin," as the son of Robert, and as aged 17. He was born therefore in 1690. His earlier career is obscure, but in a family Bible he

is described as "Charles Goldsmith of Ballyoughter" (the family residence) and as "married to Mrs. Ann Jones ye 4th of May 1718" (Prior I, 14), when therefore he was 28 years of age. "This union was not approved by the friends of either: he was destitute of the means of providing for a family, and the father of his wife having a son and three other daughters to provide for, her portion was small" (Prior I, 7). Ann Jones was daughter of the Revd. Oliver Jones of Smith Hill, master of the diocesan school at Elphin, where Charles had received his preliminary education, and where the attachment commenced. Her uncle, named Green, who was rector of Kilkenny West, provided the young couple with a house about six miles distant from himself, at a place called Pallas, in the adjoining county of Longford. "Here they took up their abode, and continued for a period of twelve years [1718 to 1730], Mr. Goldsmith officiating partly in the church of his uncle, and partly in the parish in which he resided." At Pallas therefore five of their eight children (including Oliver) were born: the other three were born at Lissoy, to which the family removed in 1730, when Charles Goldsmith, by the death of his wife's uncle, succeeded to the Rectory of Kilkenny West.

The family Bible referred to by Prior (I, 14) records the names and dates of birth of the several children as under: *Margaret*, born 22 August, 1719 (of whom nothing seems to be known); *Catherine*, born 13 January, 1721, married to Daniel Hodson (*see* § 5); *Jane*, born 9 February, 17<sup>1</sup> (*see* § 6); *Henry*, born 9 February, 17<sup>1</sup> (*see* § 7); *Oliver*, born 10 November, 1728; *Maurice*, born 7 July, 1736 (*see* § 11); *Charles*, born 16 August, 1737 (*see* § 12); *John*, 1740 (to whom there is only the briefest reference in Oliver's letter to his uncle Contarine written from Edinburgh at the close of 1753 and first printed by Prior in 1837 (I, 154): "How is my poor Jack Goldsmith? I fear his disorder is of such a nature he won't easily recover." He is said by Percy (MS. statement) to have "died young *æt.* 12."

(1) The last two figures are torn away.



The loveable character of the Revd. Charles Goldsmith has been depicted for all time in incomparable language in his wayward son's works. He is the father of "the man in black" of "the Citizen of the World," the preacher in "The Deserted Village" and Dr. Primrose in "the Vicar of Wakefield." He died suddenly early in 1747 in the fifty-seventh year of his age (Prior I, 73), the induction of his successor, the Revd. Mr. Wynne, taking place in March of that year.

"Remote from towns he ran his goodly race  
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place."

3. ANN GOLDSMITH, *née* JONES.

(Oliver's Mother.)

The death of the Revd. Charles Goldsmith in 1747 made a considerable change for the worse in the fortunes of his widow and her children.

"The wealth of the family, never great or well husbanded, necessarily suffered a serious diminution: the means of the widow were little more than sufficient to provide the necessaries of life for the other branches of the family: remittances to Oliver therefore ceased, and his prospects became darker than ever" (Prior I, 73, 74).

Ann Goldsmith had to remove in her straitened circumstances to a cottage at Ballymahon, and there Oliver seems to have idled away his time between 1749 to 1751, when he drifted off with the intention of going to America. Probably things were not made very comfortable for him at home. Anyhow the mother appears to have been disgusted and disappointed at his waywardness, and spoke to him sharply when he returned penniless. He does not seem to have again resided at Ballymahon, but to have gone to stay with his brother Henry, and afterwards with his constant friend and benefactor, Uncle Contarine, before he went off to Edinburgh, never to see his mother again. When writing from the Scottish capital on 16 September, 1753, to his boon companion, Robert

Bryanton of Ballymahon, Oliver says in a postscript : "Give my service to my mother if you see her : for as you express it in Ireland, I have a sneaking kindness for her still." After his return from his Continental wanderings, he writes twice to his brother-in-law Daniel Hodson about his mother. On 27 December, 1757, he says : "My mother too has lost Pallas ! My dear Sir, these things give me real uneasiness, and I should wish to redress them." And in November, 1758, he writes to Hodson : "Pray tell me how my mother is since she will not gratify me herself and "tell me if in anything I can be immediately serviceable to her." (This and other similar phrases in the letters of 1757 and 1758 are omitted from the 1801 publication as relating to "private family affairs.") In Oliver's letter to his brother Henry of February, 1758, he says : "My mother I am informed is almost blind : even tho I had the utmost inclination to return home, I could not behold her in distress without a capacity of relieving her from it, it would be too much to add to my present splenetic habit."

Later still in January, 1770, Oliver begs his brother Maurice to give him particulars about the family : "Tell me about my mother, my brother Hodson and his son, . . . what is become of them, where they live and what they do." Mrs. Goldsmith died in Ireland later in the same year, and in Mr. William Filby's tailor's bills against Goldsmith is the entry of £5 : 12 : 0 for "a suit of mourning" (doubtless for her) dated 8 September, 1770 (Prior I, 233).

#### 4. THE CONTARINES.

(Oliver's Aunt, Uncle, and Cousin.)

As already stated, one of the daughters of Robert Goldsmith named Jane married the Revd. Thomas Contarine, Vicar of Oran. She bore him a daughter Jane, the playmate of Oliver's childhood, and died in her sixty-third year on the 12 June, 1744 (Prior I, 55, note). "Uncle Contarine" was the best, kindest and most consistent friend of Oliver Goldsmith in his boyhood and student days ; and Oliver had a deep sense



of gratitude to him. He wrote to Contarine two letters from Edinburgh in 1753 (printed in *Prior* I, 145 and 154), and a third letter from Leyden in 1754, which is fortunately preserved.

The following incident, illustrative of Oliver's affection for his generous uncle, is copied into the *Memoir* of 1801 (page 33) from Percy's own manuscript. Oliver had borrowed some money from an Irish friend at Leyden "with which he determined to quit Holland and to visit the adjacent countries. But unfortunately his curiosity led him to view a garden, where the choicest flowers were reared for sale. Poor Goldsmith, recollecting that his uncle was an admirer of such rarities, without reflecting on the reduced state of his own finances, was tempted to purchase some of these costly flower roots to be sent as a present to Ireland, and thereby left himself so little cash that he is said to have set out on his travels with only one clean shirt and no money in his pocket."

Later Oliver wrote to Contarine's daughter, Mrs. Lawder, on 15 August, 1758, from the Temple Exchange Coffee House an affectionate letter apologising for his long silence, but explaining that he wrote to Kilmore from Leyden, Louvain and Rouen and received no answer, and referring thus to his uncle: "he is no more that soul of fire as when I once knew him. His mind was too active an inhabitant not to disorder the feeble mansion of its abode, for the richest jewels soonest wear their settings. Yet who but a fool would lament his condition, he now forgets the calamities of life, perhaps indulgent heaven has given him a foretaste of that tranquillity here which he so well deserves hereafter."

Mr. Contarine died a few months after the date of this letter, aged about 74, and left Oliver a legacy of £15, which he eventually made over to his impecunious brother Maurice. In announcing this decision (in January, 1770) Oliver says to Maurice: "The kindness of that good couple to our poor shattered family demands our sincerest gratitude, and though they have almost forgot me yet if good things at last arrive, I hope one

day to return, and encrease their good humour by adding to my own. I have sent my cousin Jenny [Mrs. Lawder] a miniature picture of myself as I believe it is the most acceptable present I can offer."

Contarine's daughter Jane married James Lawder, a well-to-do resident of Kilmore, near Carrick on Shannon. To her Oliver addressed on 15 August, 1758, the affectionate letter already quoted dwelling on the past and signing himself "Your affectionate and obliged Kinsman." It seems to have provoked no reply.

The end of the Lawders was tragic. The husband was treacherously murdered by his servants and labourers, who carried off the plate in the house and about £300 in money. For this crime no less than six of them were executed. The wife, who narrowly escaped being murdered also, died in Dublin about 1790 (Prior I, 130, note).

#### 5. CATHERINE GOLDSMITH (MRS. DANIEL HODSON).

(Sister of Oliver.)

Catherine was born 13 January, 1721. It was her private marriage with Daniel Hodson, "the son of a gentleman of good family residing at St. John's near Athlone," who was at the time of the engagement a pupil of Henry Goldsmith, that led to Oliver's entering Trinity College as a sizar instead of as a pensioner like Henry. Her father, the Revd. Charles Goldsmith, was greatly indignant at this marriage, and in order to give his daughter a marriage portion of £400, sacrificed his tithes and rented land.

To his brother-in-law Hodson, Oliver wrote two very cordial letters on 27 December, 1757, and November, 1758, the second containing a paragraph: "Dear Sister, I wrote to Kilmore (the residence of the Lawders). I wish you would let me know how that family stands affected with regard to me." It is curious that in Oliver's letter to Maurice of January, 1770, he does not ask after his sister Catherine, though he enquires about "my mother, my brother Hodson and his son, my brother Harry's son and daughter" and other members of the family. After Oliver's death,



however, Catherine Hodson, appealed to by Maurice, wrote out a full and very sympathetic account, running to twelve foolscap pages, of Oliver's youthful adventures, terminating with his being sent to Edinburgh in 1753 "for the study of Physick. From this date I am a stranger to what happened him : he wrote severall letters to his friends from Switzerland, Germany and Italy."

With reference to Oliver's enquiry quoted above as to "my Brother Hodson and his son," it may be mentioned that the poet befriended this nephew in London in 1772 to the extent of allowing him to run up a bill for £35 : 3 : 0 with his tailor William Filby. It is to be feared this bill was still unpaid at Oliver's decease (Forster II, 173).

#### 6. JANE GOLDSMITH, AFTERWARDS JOHNSON.

(Born 9 February, 1722. Sister of Oliver.)

As the family Bible entries from which were copied into Prior's *Life* (I, 14) gave as the date of the births of Henry and Jane Goldsmith the same day 9 February, 17— (leaf torn), Forster surmised and with much plausibility that they were twins, born on the 9 February, 1822 (I, 9). Jane married one Johnson, a farmer at Athlone, and appears to have written to Oliver in 1769 about her impoverished condition, which Oliver in his letter to Maurice of January, 1770, regrets his inability to relieve.

#### 7. THE REV. HENRY GOLDSMITH.

(Oliver's Elder Brother.)

Very little is known about the eldest son of the Revd. Charles Goldsmith, Henry, who was born at Pallas on the 9 February, 1722 (Prior I, 14). He was educated at Dr. Neligan's school at Elphin, afterwards matriculating at Trinity College, Dublin, on 4 May, 1741 (Prior I, 34, note). He was elected a scholar on Trinity Monday, 1743 : "but returning home in the succeeding vacation, flushed probably with his recent triumph, he indulged a youthful passion and married" (Prior I, 35).

All that the Percy Memoir of 1801 (I, 3) says about Henry is: "Of his "eldest son the Revd. Henry Goldsmith, to whom his brother dedicated "*The Traveller*, their father had formed the most sanguine hopes, as he "had distinguished himself both at school and at College, but he un- "fortunately married at the early age of nineteen: which confined him to "a Curacy, and prevented him rising to preferment in the Church." As he was born at Pallas in February, 1722, Henry must, if this statement be accurate, have become a married man in 1741, about the time he matriculated at Trinity College. There is evidently inaccuracy somewhere as to Henry's age, and it may be doubted whether his marriage took place before or after his election as a scholar of his College on Trinity Monday, 1743. From some guarded words used by Prior (the most painstaking investigator into the family history) it is possible the marriage was a secret one, as Prior suggests that when it took place "he must have "been three years older [than stated above], or have formed this "connexion previous to entering the University. To some men this tie "becomes a stimulus to exertion: to others it seems a clog upon every "effort at rising in life" (I, 35). Prior seems to decide that in Henry's case it was a clog. He speaks of Henry having "indulged a youthful passion and married," and continues shortly afterwards: "Finding "residence in College no longer eligible, the advantages of his scholarship "were sacrificed: he retired, as appears from the college books, to the "country: established a school in his father's neighbourhood: and in this "occupation added to that of curate at 'forty pounds a year,' though "possessed of talents and character, he passed the remainder of life." (Prior I, 35.)

It is nowhere very clearly stated, that it would seem that Henry acted as curate to his father at Kilkenny West, and perhaps after his father's death in 1747 he continued in office under the new Rector, the Revd. Mr. Wynne (Prior I, 73). John Forster says (I, 427): "In his early life Dr. Strean succeeded Henry Goldsmith in the curacy of Kilkenny West, which the latter occupied at the period of his death (1768) and as he is



careful to tell us, in its emoluments of £40 a year, which was not only his salary but continued to be the same when I [Strean] a successor, was appointed to that parish."

The two brothers Henry and Oliver had a strong and abiding affection for one another. Oliver had corresponded with his brother whilst he was abroad, though none of his letters have been preserved. Part of *The Traveller* had been sent to Henry from Switzerland, and when it was completed and published at the end of 1764, the poem was dedicated to him. The opening paragraph contained this sentence: "It will throw a light upon many parts of it when the reader understands that it is addressed to a man who, despising fame and fortune, has retired early to happiness and obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year." And the opening lines of the poem itself contain the familiar phrase:

"Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,  
"My heart untravelled fondly turns to thee:  
"Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain  
"And drags at each remove a lengthening chain."

Later on there is the well-known description of the village preacher:

"A man he was to all the country dear,  
"And passing rich with forty pounds a year."

There is only one letter from Oliver to Henry known to exist: that addressed "about 1759" to Henry at "Lowfield, near Ballymore in Westmeath Ireland" seeking his assistance in the disposal of copies of his book on "Polite learning" describing his own physical looks, giving Henry advice as to the education of his son, asking about his mother and other members of the family, and ending up: "by telling you what you very well know already, that I am your most affectionate friend and brother Oliver Goldsmith."

Henry was the subject of Oliver's solicitude when he was granted an interview with the Earl of Northumberland (Dr. Percy's friend) who was about to proceed to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant. We owe the report of this interview to the unsympathetic pen of Sir John Hawkins in his *Life of*

*Johnson* (p. 419). In answer to the Earl's remark that he was going to Ireland and hearing that Goldsmith was a native of that country he would be glad to do him any kindness, Oliver is made to reply: "I would say nothing but that I had a brother there, a clergyman, that stood in need of help." Hawkins' sour comment was: "thus did this idiot in the affairs of the world trifle with his fortunes and put back the hand that was held out to assist him."

The Revd. Henry Goldsmith died at Athlone at the end of May, 1768, at the age of forty-five. A suit of mourning for him ordered of Oliver's tailor William Filby cost £5 : 12 : 6 (*Forster II*, 113). The brother seems to have at once written a letter of affectionate sympathy with the family—probably to the widow, and to his nephew Henry he sent a separate letter which has only just come to light in North America, having doubtless been preserved till now by descendants of the original recipient. It is now the property of Mr. William Harris Arnold of Nutley, New Jersey, to whose kindness I owe permission for its reproduction:

London, June 7th, 1768.

My dear Henry,

Your dear father's death has afflicted me deeply. The news of this dreadful event only reached me yesterday and though I have already sent my love and condolences in a letter which you will see I pen this further line to my dear Nephew to express the hope that you and your Brother, young as you both are, will bear yourselves as the sons of such a man should. As to your own future I shall not rest until I hit upon some means of serving you; and it may be that through the influence of some of my friends here you may procure a situation suited to your talents.

Meanwhile attend diligently to your studies, neglect nothing that can advance your interest when an opening occurs. Are you still inclined towards a military career? That would necessitate, besides a certain temper and constitution, a considerable sum of ready money. Something, however, might be managed abroad—in the Indies or in America.

Let me hear from you, my dear Henry, and with much love to you both

Believe me,

Mr. Henry Goldsmith  
In Care of Mrs. Hodson,  
Athlone,  
Ireland.

Your affectionate Uncle,  
Oliver Goldsmith.



I find no mention whatever in any document (published or unpublished) that I have come across of a second son of the Revd. Henry. Oliver at the time of his brother's death was at work on the *Deserted Village* at a summer retreat in a cottage eight miles from the Edgware Road (Forster II, 124), was visited there in May, 1768, by Cooke, who marks the date as exactly two years before the poem appeared in print (May, 1770), and tells us that the writing of it, and its elaborate revision, extended over the whole interval of twenty-four months.

Is it permissible to suggest that Oliver, with his head full of other things, was a little dubious about the sex of the other child of his brother, and spoke of a son where he should have said daughter? Writing to his brother Maurice in January, 1770, with anxious enquiries about the several members of the family, Oliver says: "Tell me about my mother, my brother Hodson and his son: *my brother Harry's son and daughter*, my sister Johnson, the family of Ballyoughter, what is become of them, where they live and how they do. You talked of being my only brother, I don't understand you—Where is Charles?" (*Memoir*, p. 89.)

Here it will be observed, Oliver makes tender enquiries after Henry's "son and daughter." He says nothing of the widow or of a second son. In the only letter of Oliver's to his brother that is now extant, ascribed by Percy to "about 1759," Oliver thus refers to the son: "The reasons you have given me for breeding your son a scholar are judicious and convincing . . . Preach then my dear Sir, to your son not the excellence of human nature nor the disrespect of riches, but endeavour to teach him thrift and economy. Let his poor wandering Uncle's example be placed in his eyes. I had learned from books to love virtue, before I was taught from experience the necessity of being selfish."

I quote from the original holograph letter, not from the somewhat bowdlerised version of it that Percy printed in the *Memoir* of 1801, and that has since been copied in all subsequent biographies.

It remains therefore to consider what happened to those whom Henry left behind him in 1768 of whom there is any record. There was a widow, of whose parentage and maiden name, or of the circumstances of her widowhood nothing seems to be known, his son Henry, and his daughter Catherine.

#### 8. HENRY GOLDSMITH'S WIDOW.

It was in all probability Mrs. Henry Goldsmith of whom Johnson wrote to George Steevens on 25 February, 1777, as recorded by Boswell in Volume III, Chapter III :

"Mr. Steevens . . . joined Dr. Johnson in Kind assistance to a female relation of Dr. Goldsmith, and desired that on her return to Ireland she would procure authentic particulars of the life of her relation. Concerning her is the following letter :

"To George Steevens Esq.

"February 25th 1777.

"Dear Sir,

"You will be glad to hear that from Mrs. Goldsmith whom we lamented as drowned, I have received a letter full of gratitude to us all, with promises to make the enquiries which we recommended to her. You will tell the good news,

"I am, Sir,

"Your most etc.

"Sam Johnson."

Prior (II, 562) expands this incident, assigning it definitely to the widow of the Revd. Henry, but gives no new facts, except to add that "being but slenderly provided for, she accepted the situation of Matron to the Meath Infirmary at Navan."

#### 9. HENRY, SON OF THE REVD. HENRY GOLDSMITH.

(Oliver's Nephew.)

Henry, the son, Prior describes as "distinguished for spirit, intelligence and personal beauty . . . A commission being obtained for him in the army, he quitted Ireland for North America about the year 1782." A constant friend and correspondent of his, the Revd. Thomas Handcock wrote on 7 October, 1799 (Prior II, 564) that Henry had been a lieutenant in the 54th Regiment, and that "with an uncommon flow of spirits (he)



possesses a large portion of his uncle's genius." He married an American lady from Rhode Island and "after the peace settled with her somewhere in Nova Scotia."

"He plunged through unheard of distresses and difficulties until very lately, when accident made our young Prince, the Duke of Kent, acquainted with his person and history: and His Royal Highness lost no time in raising him, a wife and ten children, considerably above want, as I learn by a letter from Goldsmith within these last six weeks. I had . . . received his rent and managed his affairs, and in his distresses he often urged me to sell his interest in the Deserted Village [Lissoy] which I continued to avoid, to his present very great satisfaction."

The particular way in which Henry Goldsmith's needs were brought under the notice of the Duke of Kent is not recorded, but His Royal Highness had been sent to Canada in 1791, and was Commander-in-Chief of the forces in British North America in 1799-1800. What Mr. Hancock says in his letter is confirmed by an unpublished letter written by Henry's sister Catherine to Bishop Percy on 6 January, 1802, apropos of her uncle Charles' statement to the Bishop that "the name is extinct except in his family":

"He never considered," said she, "that I had cousins in this country that had male heirs, as also a much lov'd brother now residing at Halifax in North America, who has ten children, and has either four or five sons lawfully by an amiable wife. From my brother's account, his Children possess uncommon abilities. His eldest son Henry he intends for the Bar: his second son is a midshipman, and his third son Oliver, he mention'd in a letter to me he would have educated in Ireland. The Duke of Kent, my brother's particular Patron and Friend, has got him the place of Assistant Engineer at Halifax, and means to provide for him in a better way when opportunity offers."

A letter by Henry Goldsmith to a kinsman dated 20 March, 1808, brings the story of this Nova Scotian family up to a somewhat later date.

"I am fixed here in the Commissariat Department and have a family of nine children, five sons and four daughters. The eldest Henry, follows the profession of the law: Hugh Colvill is I hope ere this, a lieutenant in the Navy: Oliver is with a merchant at Boston: Charles is a midshipman on this station, and Benjamin a boy. The daughters Ann, Catherine, Eliza and Jane are at home with me, and promise to be all I wish them." (Prior II, 568.)

Hugh Colvill Goldsmith (1789-1841) referred to in his father's letter, merits a passing mention as being the young sailor who on 8 April, 1824, shocked Cornish susceptibilities by displacing the famous rocking Logan Stone at the Land's End, and had to arrange for its replacement later in that year (29 October to 2 November) in its original position, which as the weight of the stone is variously given as 60 to 80 tons, was no easy matter. Doubtless because of this foolhardy exploit, he has a niche in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, being in fact the only member of the Goldsmith family other than the poet who is thus honoured. He was born at St. Andrews, New Brunswick, on 2 April, 1789, and was at the time of the Logan Rock incident a Naval Lieutenant in command of the "Nimble" revenue cutter off the coast of Cornwall. He was never promoted, and died at sea off St. Thomas in the West Indies on 8 October, 1841. An incidental reference to Charles Goldsmith (also referred to in his father's letter of 1808 as a midshipman) shows that he was afterwards a Commander in the Navy. His dates are 1795-1854.

#### 10. CATHERINE, DAUGHTER OF THE REV. HENRY GOLDSMITH.

(Oliver's Niece.)

The facts as to the daughter of Henry Goldsmith are easier to piece together, as Bishop Percy drew up when in London in July, 1800, a memorandum as to her case which has fortunately been preserved in manuscript, and gives incidentally some particulars as to other members of the Goldsmith family.



There are a number of pitiful letters from this poor little lonely and suffering soul addressed to the Bishop at dates ranging from 1794 to March, 1803, with drafts of two of the Bishop's replies, mercifully modified before despatch, referring to his monetary advances already made to her, and speaking of the "constant source of plague and vexation" which the question of the publication of the *Memoir* had been to him. The end came in July, 1803, when one McDonnell wrote to the Bishop's secretary that Catherine had died "after a painful illness to which her dependant and helpless situation must have greatly contributed." McDonnell had seen to her being decently buried, and thought 8 or 9 guineas would reimburse the total cost. No doubt the Bishop sent him this.

## II. MAURICE GOLDSMITH.

(Oliver's Brother.)

Maurice, the next child of the Revd. Charles Goldsmith after Oliver, was born on 7 July, 1736, and was followed a year later (16 August, 1737) by Charles, and in 1740 by a fourth son John. Maurice was not therefore, as stated erroneously in a note on page 86 of the Percy *Memoir* "our poet's youngest brother." He first emerges from obscurity early in 1770, when he was in his thirty-fourth year, and wrote to Oliver a letter from the Lawder's house at Kilmore asking for assistance. Oliver's reply has fortunately been preserved. It bears no date, but Percy ascribes it to "January 1770," which is about right, as endorsed upon it is Maurice's receipt dated 4 February, 1770, for £15, the amount of a legacy left by Uncle Contarine to Oliver which he made over to his brother (I, 89).

According to Prior (II, 519), Sir Joshua Reynolds undertook after the death of the poet on 4 April, 1774, "to superintend his affairs until the arrival from Ireland of such of his relatives as should be authorised to receive them." For answer Maurice Goldsmith appeared in London "a plain unlettered man, too homely it seems in appearance and manners

to command much consideration from his late brother's accomplished friends" (Prior II, 524). The still surviving Mrs. Gwyn (the "Jessamy Bride") told Prior long years after that :

" Being in a small party in the house of Sir Joshua when the latter was "summoned downstairs, he returned after a considerable absence and "whispered her that he had been below with Goldsmith's brother, but "thinking a little beer or spirits there better adapted to his taste than tea "in the drawing room, he had entertained him in what he considered the "most appropriate manner. She, with the usual kindness of her sex, "thought his behaviour scarcely becoming in the President to so near a "relative of his departed friend." (II, 524.)

Doubtless it was at this time that Sir Joshua gave Maurice the subjoined (undated) note of introduction to the "Rev'd. Dr. Percy Northumberland House" still preserved amongst the Percy papers :

"Sir Joshua Reynolds's compliments and begs leave to introduce to Dr. Percy Mr. Goldsmith brother of his late friend Dr. Goldsmith."

As the next of kin, Maurice was entitled to administer his brother's affairs, and there is at Somerset House the formal Probate granted on 28 June, 1774, to "Maurice Goldsmith, the natural and lawful brother and next of kin to the said deceased." As Oliver died in debt, there was nothing for Maurice to administer or receive, and he left London on 10 June, 1774, writing to Mr. Hawes, the apothecary who attended his brother, his "most sincere thanks for your kind behaviour to me since my arrival here," and for his "care, assiduity and diligence with respect to my brother Doctor Goldsmith."

No doubt Percy improved the occasion, when Maurice came to see him at Northumberland House with Sir Joshua's note of introduction in his pocket, by giving him some sound advice, with perhaps a cash contribution on account, and certainly with an admonition to collect all his brother's



letters to members of the family in Ireland that he could manage to pick up. For on 15 July, 1776, Maurice wrote to Percy as under :

July 15, 1776.

Revd. Sir,

When I last had the honour of seeing you at your Chambers in Northumberland House you most kindly told me you w<sup>o</sup>d willingly serve me, I have Sir according to your Order collected in this Country all the Letters and a few anecdotes of my Brother, the late Dr. Goldsmith that I c<sup>o</sup>d procure which I assure you Sir are entirely Jenuine, the Anecdotes wrote by his Sister who ware both inseperable Companions in their youth.

I am much concernd that two of these Letters which I send are not entirely Legibl and that it will cost som pains to make them and the Memoirs fitt for the press ; So Dr Sir to your goodness and protection I commit them thoroughly satisfied you will serve the Brother of a Man who really lov<sup>d</sup> and Esteemd you.

I can ssure you Sir I have gon several Miles to collect them and as my circumstances at present are not very affluent a small assistance w<sup>o</sup>d be gratefully accepted, sh<sup>d</sup> any accrue from these papers wich with what my good Friend Sr. Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Garrick promisd to supply, will not be deemd I hope unworthy of yr publication which you and Sir Joshua told me you w<sup>o</sup>d get affected.

I am Sir with the greatest respect Sir your verry Obet. Humble Servant

Maurice Goldsmith

I hope you will do me the honour to let me know if you receiv<sup>d</sup>. these by directing to me at Charles Town near Elphin Ireland.

There is nothing to show that anything definite followed this appeal for money : and perhaps on that account, Maurice next addressed himself to Dr. Johnson, to whom he wrote at Bolt Court an undated letter bearing the Elphin post-mark as under :

"To Doctor Johnson at his house in Bolt Court Fleet Street London.

"I lately had the Honour to receive a letter from my good Friend the Revd. "Doctr. Percy, who from som Papers I had sent him did intend writing the life of the "Late Doctr. Goldsmith : he tells me that from the esteem you have had for the poor "Doctr. you have determind to take the work under your protection and that you had "also promised to use your interest with the booksellers to let one impression be printed "of all his poetical writings . . . Your taking the trouble to write and set of(f) the "life of the Doctr. by your able judicious and highly esteemed pen will be a lasting "honour to his memory and to his Family."

In a note to the print of Oliver's letter to Maurice of "January 1770," Percy gives the following further information about Maurice (p. 86).

"Having been bred to no business, he upon some occasion complained to our bard, that he found it difficult to live like a gentleman, on which Oliver begged he would, without delay, quit so unprofitable a trade and betake himself to some handicraft employment. Maurice wisely took the hint, and bound himself apprentice to a cabinet maker. He had a shop in Dublin, when the Duke of Rutland was Lord Lieutenant : who at the instance of Mr. Orde, then principal secretary of state (now Lord Bolton) out of regard to his brother's memory, made him an inspector of the licences in that city. He was also appointed mace-bearer on the erection of the Royal Irish Academy : both of them places very compatible with his business. In the former he gave proof of great integrity by detecting a fraud committed on the revenue in his department, by which probably he might himself have profited, if he had not been a man of principle. He died without issue, about seven years ago."

As a matter of fact, Maurice died early in the winter of 1792-3, as appears from a letter written by Dr. Thomas Campbell, who first attempted Oliver's biography, to the Bishop of Dromore—then in London—on 12 June, 1793 (Nichols' *Literary Illustrations*, VII, 790). Campbell says : "Alas ! poor Maurice, He is to receive no comfort from your Lordship's labours in his behalf. He departed from a miserable life early last winter, and luckily has left no children : but he has left a widow, and faith a very nice one, who called on me one of the few days I spent in Dublin after Christmas, so that you will not want claimants."

The numerous letters from Maurice to the Bishop which have been preserved appear to show that he had really made sustained efforts to collect in Ireland such of the original letters written by Oliver to his relatives as were procurable. One such letter, and that of the greatest interest, viz. : the letter written to Uncle Contarine from Leyden in 1754 was not retrieved until nine years after the letter of 15 July, 1776, already quoted, for Maurice writes to the Bishop on 9 June, 1785, "I send your Lordship a letter from my brother to his Uncle Contarine dated from Lydon."



Vol. VIII of Nichols' *Literary Illustrations* (published in 1858) contains at pp. 236-240, extracts from correspondence between the Bishop and Edmund Malone from which it appears that on 16 June, 1785, Percy was urging that the Members of the Club (of which Oliver was an original Member) should show "our regard for the departed Bard by relieving his only brother, and so far as I hear, the only one of his family that wants relief." (This was by no means the case, as Percy was afterwards to learn by bitter experience.) He wrote again to Malone on 17 October, 1786, "I must entreat you to exert all your influence among the gentlemen of "The Club, and particularly urge it on Sir Joshua Reynolds, to procure "subscriptions for the relief of poor Maurice Goldsmith, who is suffering "great penury and distress being not only poor but very unhealthy . . . "A guinea a piece from the members of the Club would be a great "relief to him."

Maurice's subsequent appointment in 1787 as the Mace-bearer to the Royal Irish Academy and his place in the Licence Office appears to have eased somewhat the final years of his chequered life, but when he died in 1792, a new appeal for the Bishop's help came from his widow, Esther Goldsmith.

#### IIA. ESTHER GOLDSMITH, WIDOW OF MAURICE.

All that is known about her is that she is described in a Petition to the Lord Lieutenant (the draft of which in Percy's writing was left amongst his papers) as "the daughter of a respectable clergyman," and as "left wholly destitute" by the death of her husband Maurice Goldsmith. She got various grants from a fund in the gift of the Lord Lieutenant known as the Concordatum, and on the last page of Prior's *Life* (Vol. II, 576) is a letter from her dated Rushport, Elphin, 19 June, 1793, to Mr. J. C. Walker asking his influence in favour of her appointment as housekeeper to the Royal Irish Academy.

There are two unpublished later letters (1794) from Rushport to Bishop Percy, in one of which Esther wants to know about the subscription to the

*Memoir*, and in the other she thanks the Bishop for £15 which she had received from the Concordatum Fund. A later letter dated 17 October, 1801, from Catherine, daughter of the Revd. Henry Goldsmith, to the Bishop seems to show that Esther had remarried. "She thinks she is as well entitled to the money arising from the publication of my Uncle's works as I am, but there I must beg leave to differ in opinion with her." Catherine gives some more particulars which she thinks the Bishop ought to know, but "if Mrs. Goldsmith knew the information came to your Lordship through me, 'twou'd bring her tongue upon me, which she can use well."

## 12. CHARLES GOLDSMITH.

(Oliver's Brother.)

Charles Goldsmith (born 1717, died 1805) the youngest but one of the Revd. Charles Goldsmith's children, comes on the scene earlier than the others. Encouraged by the accounts which had reached Ireland of his brother Oliver's arrival in England and growing literary fame, he ventured to the Metropolis in the year 1757, and as Northcote says in his *Life of Reynolds* (I, 332-3): "Having heard of his brother Noll mixing in the first society in London, he took it for granted that his fortune was made, and that he could soon make a brother's also: he therefore left home without notice: but soon found, on his arrival in London, that the picture he had formed of his brother's situation was too highly coloured, that Noll could not introduce him to his great friends, and in fact that, although out of a jail, he was often out of a lodging."

The garret where Goldsmith then wrote and slept is supposed to have been one of the courts near Salisbury Square. His letters were addressed from the neighbouring Temple-exchange coffee-house near Temple Bar, and the secret of the lodging is said to have been won from the coffee-house waiter "George" to whom Charles Goldsmith confided his relationship. (Forster I, 124.)



Thus disappointed, Charles quitted London in a few days, suddenly and secretly as he had entered it, "in a humble capacity it is said, for Jamaica": whence says Forster (I, 125) "he did not return till after four-and-thirty years to tell this anecdote, and to be described by Malone as not a little like his celebrated brother in person, speech and manner."

When Charles came back to this country in 1791 it was to arrange for his ultimate settlement with his family in England: but after the peace of Amiens (1802), he sold his house, and with his wife (a Creole), a daughter and a son named Oliver (born in England), migrated to the South of France. In consequence of Buonaparte's order for detaining British subjects, he again returned to England in 1803 by way of Holland, much reduced in circumstances, and died about 1805 at humble lodgings in Ossulston Street, Somers Town.

In an original letter of Charles himself, dated 2 September, 1795, in the Percy bundle of Goldsmithiana, he says specifically: "I paid in 1791 a visit to my native country: on my arrival I found the greatest part of my relations and old friends had paid the debt of Nature: my brother Maurice remained: he gave me a pleasing account of the great benefits you had been pleased to bestow on him." As Maurice had died, Charles put in a plea for help for himself in view of the necessity of supporting "a wife and five children." These were of course the offspring of his Jamaica marriage with a Creole, and Charles said nothing about any former marriage. Percy is not known to have answered the letter: but on 8 December, 1801, Charles made another appeal. Before answering this the Bishop made some cautious enquiries of another member of the family, Catherine, daughter of the Revd. Henry, who was already (since 1794) a candidate for his charity. She replied on 28 December, 1801, that "there are some parts of his [Charles'] letter true, and many others not so. He is indeed a most delightful companion, abounds with wit and humour, and is perfectly the gentleman, but he does not possess the steadiness or benevolent heart that my much respected father or Uncle Oliver did. At the same time

I think he has a much better claim than my Uncle Maurice's widow, for she was left a very handsome fortune of near two hundred a year, and more than a thousand pounds in ready money. I think she has no title at all to receive anything from the sale of the Poems." Later, Catherine wrote again to the Bishop on 6 January, 1802, saying she had information that her Uncle (Charles) "had a great deal of money in the Funds, that he had some children and the most of them natural children. I assure you, my Lord, he has a great deal of art and duplicity." Percy wrote Charles in 1802 some sort of letter, which the latter says he never received. This was very possibly the case, in view of his migration to France after the peace of Amiens.

Through the exertions of Edmund Malone, Charles was discovered to be back in London, and he wrote to the Bishop in 1803 some details of his experiences in France, following this up later in 1804 with a fuller statement which is very readable and quite interesting.

The last letter preserved from Charles Goldsmith is dated 24 March, 1805, and is in a shaky hand, saying he is afraid "my poor little son Oliver will soon be left fatherless and without a friend." Probably Charles died soon after, and according to the letter of a neighbour, Mr. R. C. Roffe, dated 12 February, 1821, "almost in a state of second childhood. His wife, with a son (Oliver) he had by her in England, went to the West Indies": and according to a quotation given by Prior (II, 574) from a Jamaica newspaper, this Oliver died at Belmont on 21 October, 1828, in the thirty-second year of his age.

It must be added to the above that before Percy had heard from Charles, he had in 1794 received a letter from one John Goldsmith, a sergeant of the South Cork Militia, claiming to be Charles's son. At first Percy evidently thought the man an impostor. On one of John's letters the Bishop had pencilled "natural son of Charles Goldsmith," and has marked as "not true" a story of the marriage of his parents by "my uncle Henry Goldsmith, who was then Rector of the Parish they lived in," and



the reception of such parents by the grandmother Ann Goldsmith and Catherine Hodson his aunt. John told the Bishop on 2 October, 1808, "I did not imagine my father Charles Goldsmith was in existence, as I did not either see or hear from him since I saw your Lordship in Dublin in the year 1793, nor did I ever hear of his being married a second time." As there are amongst the Percy papers receipts dated in October, 1808, May, 1809, and September, 1810, for a total of £35 in all for money disbursed by the Bishop for the benefit of this John Goldsmith, Percy may have considered there was something in his story after all.

As to what subsequently happened to this John Goldsmith and the eight children on whose behalf he appealed to the generosity of Dr. Percy, there seems to be no information available, but Prior (II, 574) mentions that "a person named Goldsmith, and claiming to be a nephew of the poet, died in the Cholera Hospital in Bristol in 1833: he was in a state of destitution and may have had no just right to the honour he assumed." He may have been this John Goldsmith, son (legitimate or otherwise) of Charles Goldsmith.

#### THE PROFITS OF THE PERCY MEMOIR.

The original design of Bishop Percy in undertaking the *Memoir* of his friend Goldsmith was to benefit Maurice. Then Catherine, daughter of Henry, was added as a participant in the assumed profits: afterwards (when Maurice died and Charles revealed himself) Charles Goldsmith, the sole then remaining brother of Oliver. Percy's ultimate decision, when the work took shape and he had made his agreement with Cadell and Davies in 1797, was for 125 of the 250 free copies of the work given to him by Cadell and Davies for disposal to be sold through White the bookseller of Fleet Street for the benefit of Charles, and the remaining 125 copies to be sold through Archer the bookseller of Dublin for the benefit of Catherine, daughter of the Revd. Henry. The London copies seem to have gone off fairly well. Percy in a Memorandum dated Dromore, 24 May, 1808, explaining the affair long after the event to Dr. R. Anderson (*Literary*

*Illustrations*, VII, 189-192), says that from Charles "the Bishop frequently heard, informing him that the payments were duly made, and whatever copies he desired were delivered to him to dispose of among his friends for his own benefit. He believes Mr. Charles Goldsmith is since dead, but the account is still open with his family, to whom Mr. White must account for any that may have remained of the 125 copies delivered to him." The case of the 125 Irish copies was less satisfactory. "It was principally on account of Catherine Goldsmith, who had been reduced to indigence, that the Bishop had applied in 1800 to Messrs. Cadell and Davies to afford some present relief, to alleviate the distress occasioned by the delay of the publication : which being refused by them, the Bishop had supplied the same himself, and continued to do so till her death, which took place before Mr. Archer had come to a settlement for the 125 copies transmitted to him. Part of these are still unsold . . . Whatever arises from this sale, or remains of Mr. Archer's balance that was unpaid to or for the niece, shall be delivered to any relative of Dr. Goldsmith who shall be found a proper object of the same." (*Nichols' Literary Illustrations*, VII, 191.)







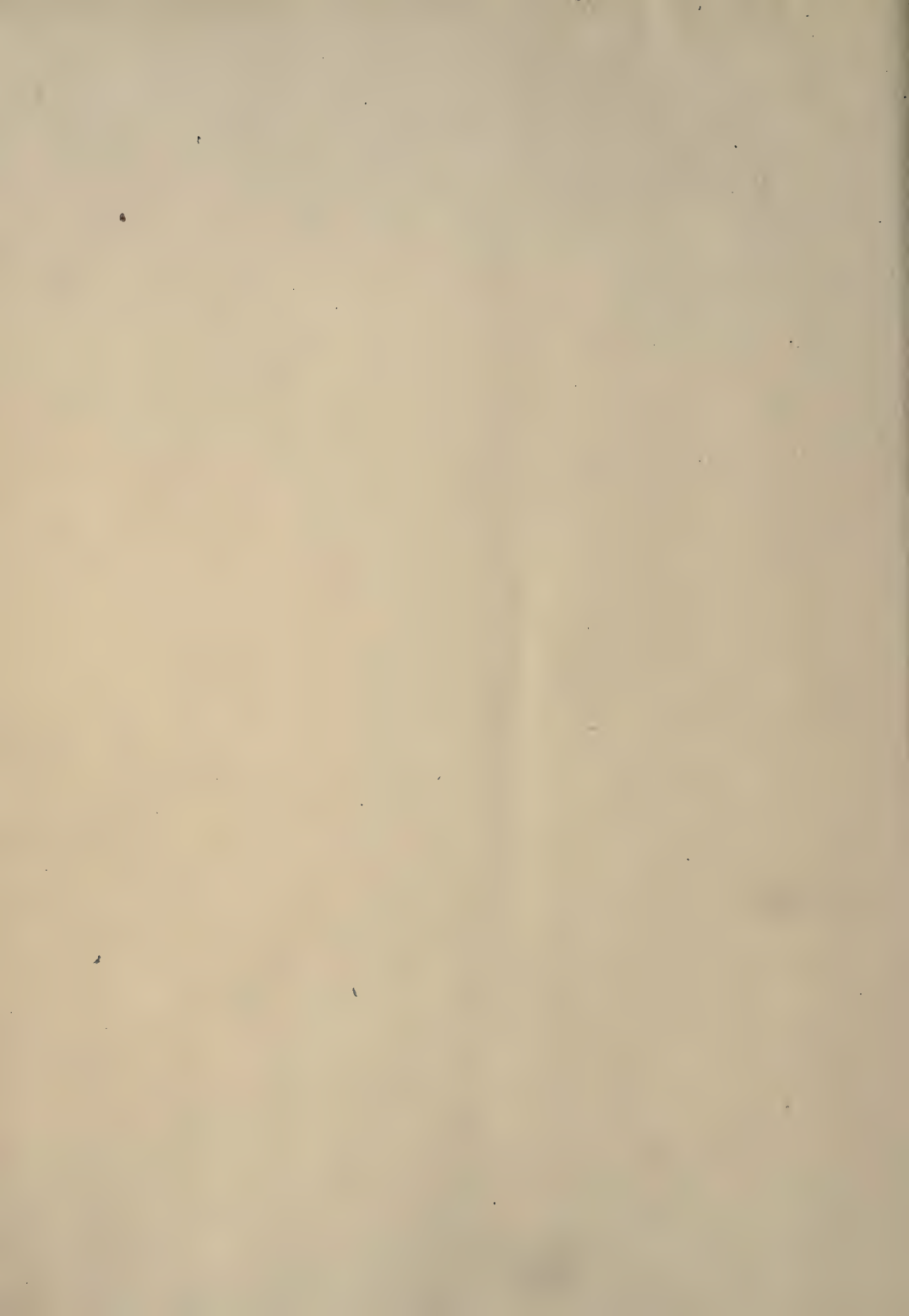




















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Clarke, (Sir) Ernest  
The family letters of  
Oliver Goldsmith

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